Though the nuclear family predominates,
591 custom dictates that the house be near mem-
613 bers of the same lineage or patrilineal
[361] group, perhaps because of the patrilineal
[592] system of land inheritance. In the parajes groups of houses in which families composed of mother, father, uncles, and other members of the patriline live are common.
[351] No fences mark the limits of the property; their infrequent presence merely keeps the
591 pigs and chickens under control. This group
592 of houses, easily accessible and inhabited by people related by kinship, constitutes the most important influence in the individual's formation, since it is here that he acquires his first experiences and cultural values, as well as the emotional links that will have the greatest weight in his life. This system of patrilocal residence is observed all through the region, even in compact villages like Aguacatenango, where lack of space favors dispersion. B. Metzger (1959) tells us, "Looking at the nuclear families to trace patrilocality there, we find that in 74 cases where we have adequate data, 39 are in the same block and 12 in adjacent blocks with husband's parents or siblings; 11 in the same block and 8 in adjacent blocks with wife's parents or siblings. 4 are classed to neither spouse's family."

351 In villages or cabeceras of a compact type
591 it is customary to mark family plots by a
592 fence of stones or sticks, with entrance toward the street (Chanal, Sivaca, Amatenango, Aguacatenango.) Occasionally, when the nuclear family is divided because of the marriage of one of the sons, then the "solar" or the "sitio" (as it is called in the region) is subdivided by another fence that separates the portion now belonging to the new family. A door allows easy communication between both families. Sometimes, even three nuclear families live in a large sitio, divided by fences.

583 *Types of Marriage*

Types of marriage vary from that following the old traditional to one requiring the

[P. 217-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

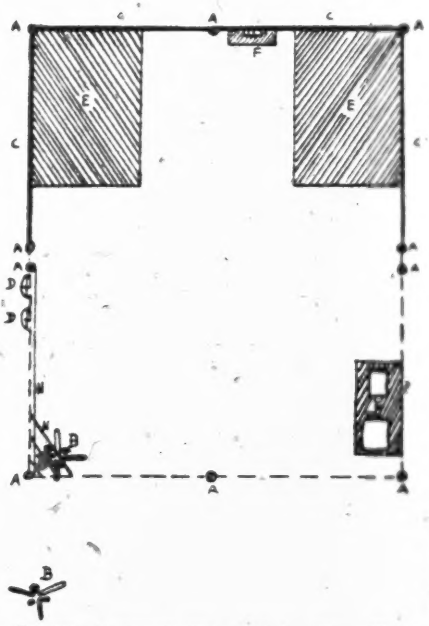

FIG. 288—El Encanto, Chis. Bachajon House. Plan. (Scale 1:100).

A. Uprights, kuk'up.
B. Fire.
C. Wall, p'ahk.
D. Rat Trap.
E. Beds.
F. Altar.
G. Table with Metates.
H. Racks.

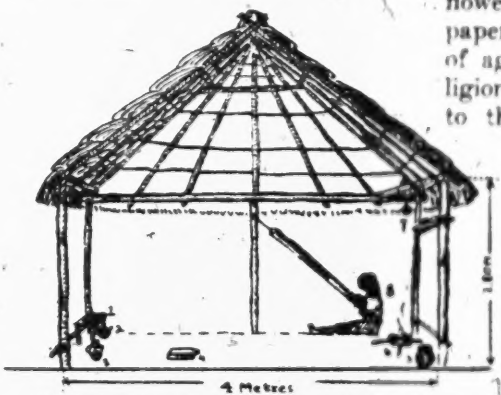

FIG. 289—El Encanto, Chis. Section of Bachajon House.

1. Table, ahk'en, with Metates.
2. Basket of clay, tcavek lum.
3. Tenango water jar, k'ip.
4. Squatting chair, tsamate.
5. Olla, ocom.
6. Fire, kak'.
7. Racks, baxtet, with packages.
8. Woman weaving.

a central front and back post, and two posts close together on each side at the ends of the walls, supported the roof-beams. There were no horizontal members save the plates, following the line of the eaves. The rafters were built up from these direct to the ridge-pole, joined by light cross pieces, or thatching-poles, laid on outside. Near the top they were braced by a purlin of heavy logs on the inside. From floor to eaves it was 1.80 meters, and about the same from eaves to the ridge-pole. The floor was of hard dirt, fairly well levelled and well swept. We were told that situations on hills, such as this, are commonly chosen to assure drainage, and that there is no orientation.

The altar, a table and a large cross decorated with flowers, pine-tips, and bits of paper, which will be spoken of again when discussing religion, was placed at the back to the right of the middle post. In front, to the right, was the table, *ahk'en*, on which were two metates, or grinding stones. They were legless, one end being raised slightly by propping with stones. The finer one was called *skaltca-tut* ("metate-small"), it was made of a fine, sandy lime-

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Tenango

green wall away to the westward. Midway, there is a break in the slope, with a dramatic splash of deep red cliffs, in violent contrast to the fertile grass and soft tones of the limestone outcrops. Only the upper end of this valley belongs to Tenango, so little, in fact that the inhabitants cannot practice the usual, sprawling milpa system of agriculture. The very yards are planted, and the fields start almost in the village, radiating from it in a close patchwork as in Europe. Everything is fenced with roughly split planks set on end, and fences line the road into Tenango where it passes through the cornfields. The houses with their yards lie close about an open plaza in which are the grey bones of a ruined church, a

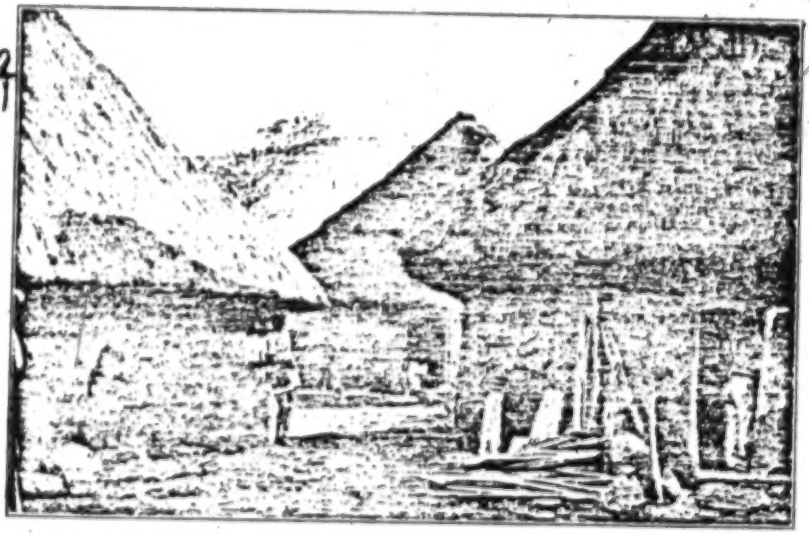

FIG. 313—Tenango, Chis. Houses.

whitewashed, palm-roofed native one, and the shack of a Cabildo for the Maestro. The streets are lined with useful trees, oranges, gourds, and a few bananas, which do poorly at this altitude.

The houses are square and well-made with walls of broad, split planks covered with mud (figs. 311-312). The roofs are steeply thatched and pyramidal, or have a short ridge along which broken pots are laid after the manner of tiles. The frame-work differs from that described in the last chapter in having cross-pieces laid between the plates. There are no chimneys, the smoke is allowed to seep through the thatch, keeping out vermin and making the roofs steam like a clam-bake.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Tenejapa

361 Amatenango lies in an open valley. It is estimated at three
342 hundred houses, each in a fenced yard of good size, and shaded with
351 fruit trees. The houses are large and well built, of mud and grass
245 thatch, with porches. The small church and Town Hall are tiled-
346 roof and stuccoed. The fields, which lie close around the town, and
344 the gardens in the town itself are watered by a stream brought down
241 a very pretty, roaring flume from higher land behind the village.
312 The irrigation system is fairly elaborate, and is unique in this area as far as we know.

323 The pottery, which is their chief product, is almost all of one shape, a sphere, with three handles and a narrow bottle-neck with a flat lip. The decoration does not vary. Both shape and design, how-

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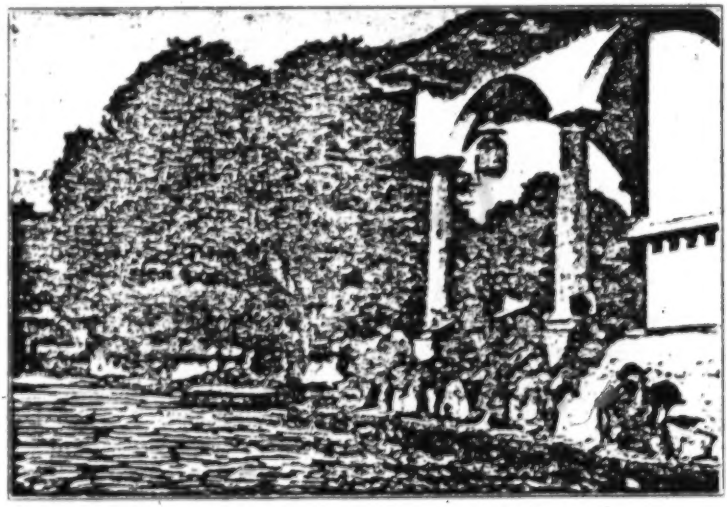

Fig. 333—Tenejapa, Chis. Indians at the Town Hall.

323 ever, are of considerable charm. The polish is fine and smooth, giving an even golden-red colour all over, with the decoration in a deep, reddish brown. No such fine, finished work is done by other tribes in the area. The pots are baked by placing them on a rectangle of boards, two or more meters square, around a hot fire. The woman in charge turns them until they are done (fig. 333). These pots are
[443] carried by the men as far as San Cristóbal, where they are redis-
[492] tributed, and to Nenton in Guatemala. Their industry is sufficient to enable them to maintain mules for carrying their goods, although both men and beasts are equally loaded.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

342 177 178 434 of witchcraft. Today probably 95 percent of the new roofs are made of tile. Often the old roofs cannot be replaced with tile because the rafters were not built to support them. One result of the change has been the dependence on a carpenter to construct the gables, since they have to be lined up more accurately than they do with thatch or palm roofs. [335]

361 351 434 House lots in the town center are preferred to those on the margins. As residents of house sites on the ejido lands at the margins of the town acquire wealth, one of the first things they try to do is acquire a house closer to the plaza. These lots are smaller, averaging about 500 square meters, while those farther out average 900 square meters. In a sample measurement of 100 house lots, the size ranged from 180 to 1,440 square meters, and the average size was 77 square meters. Considering the advantages of a large lot in growing chile fruits and corn, the preference for smaller central lots reveals the strong prestige factor influencing choice. [554]

352 435 [513] House furnishings include both purchased and homemade items. Sleeping accommodations consist of wooden bedboards, either nailed on a frame or simply laid on blocks and covered with a straw mat. Woolen blankets from Comitán are sold locally at a price of 24 pesos or for 20 pesos in San Cristóbal and 18 pesos in Comitán. Most households own two or three wooden benches which line the walls of the porch and are made locally. Small chairs are purchased from Chamula carpenters at a cost of 2 to 4 pesos, as well as a small table costing about 4. A higher table is provided for the saints' pictures and candle holders, incense burner, and flower vases or tin cans. Hooks are fashioned from the crotch of trees and suspended on the house posts. Wooden boxes are bought from Ladino carpenters in San Cristóbal at a cost of 10 to 20 pesos depending on size and workmanship and are used to store clothing. In addition to the homemade water holders, water carriers, comales, strainers, and bowls, handmade glazed ware from San Cristóbal, factory-made porcelain dishes, metal cooking pots, knives, and spoons are purchased. Gourds provide serving ware for ceremonial occasions. Stone grinding platforms and rollers are purchased in San Cristóbal for about 10 pesos. Two new items have become increasingly popular in the past five years: a metal grinding machine for corn, hand operated and costing from 40 to 60 pesos depending on the size and quality, and a hinged press for tortillas, costing 15 pesos if made [908] [322] 415 435 439 [412] 435 415 177

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

592 decisions are made, most of his life conflicts created and solved. Basically, it is as a member of a particular household that a person relates to people living outside his home. There is no more unhappy position for a person than being an "orphan," a person without relatives who can give him a home.

Moreover, the household functions as a political unit, being the unit of recruitment of personnel for the larger institutions of the village, such as the local government.

Physical Setting

•351 592 The domestic territory is the sitio: the land and buildings of a single household. The boundaries of this residential site are delimited by a low fence and a gate facing one street. The fence is made of pickets tied with maguey rope or of thorny branches. The sitio entrance from the street is a tranca, a gate made of two large, sliding, horizontal poles attached to a short, vertical column on each side.

The fences and gates are important social symbols, delimiting the territory of the domestic group which resides in it. When a household splits into two separate domestic groups, but keeps on sharing the same original sitio, a new fence is built between them. Occasionally, this fence will not be built for a period of time, but the two domestic groups will build separate living quarters and separate cook-houses. Even then, the households will have their territory within the sitio clearly delimited, if not fenced. In any case, a new gate is opened, symbolizing the independence of the families living within the sitio.

351 592 571 [578] When the people in two adjacent sitios have close social ties, they open an interior gate in the common fence, connecting the two yards. June Nash has noticed that if any disagreement occurs between the people residing in the two contiguous sitios, the interior gates are barricaded even more strongly than the remainder of the fence, symbolically severing social communication (Nash, J: 1959).

351 592 [343] [342] [241] Inside the sitios, there are several areas of activity (see Fig. 10): the front yard (ti?naie) where animals are tied when brought to the sitio, where corn is put to dry, etc., and where there are buildings (hna) such as the cook-house and others which serve as sleeping quarters. The back yard is the place where things are stored and where a small garden is cultivated. [415] [252] [343] There are other spots, such as the place for the water jugs, the place for washing the mixtamal (corn mesh used for making tortillas), the sweat bath, etc.

342 The buildings themselves are mainly wattle and daub with thatch or palm roofs in the traditional Mayan pattern. There is, nevertheless, some variation in the use of cane, shingles and planks for walls, or tile roofs, which indicates a desire to imitate ladino ways rather than the wealth of the household. The houses have small porches which serve as "living room," places for receiving visitors, grooming, cleaning corn, or enjoying the twilight after a good day's work (see Figs. 10 and 11).

House Ritual

342 592 The building of a new house is an important social event

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 109]

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

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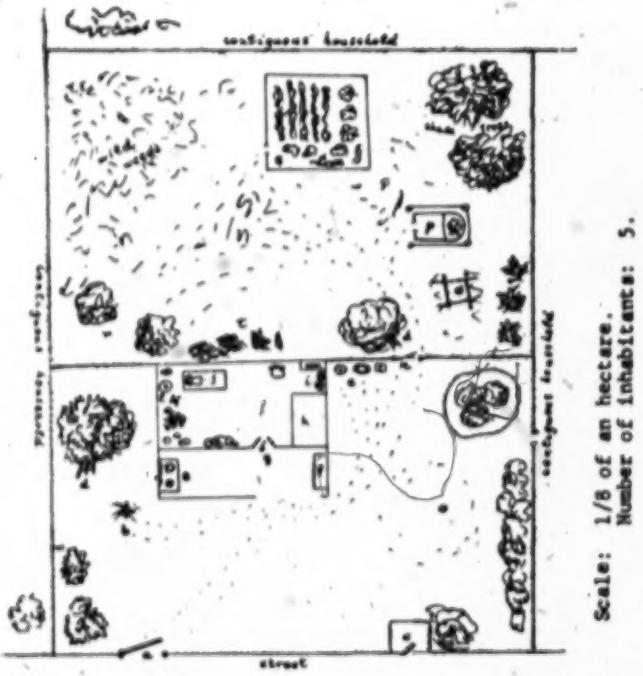

Fig. 10.--Model of a Standard Household

a--entrance gate
b--nixtamal washing-pot
c--water pots
d--chicken coop in a tree
e--Saint's altar in the corridor
f--bench for receiving visitors
g--double door
h--wooden bed
i--petates (mats) chest and chair
j--table for making tortillas (with the grinding stone or metate)
k--molino and fire place
l--water pot inside the house
m--little stools for seating during meals and stored bags
n--gate to back yard
o--raised pig-pen
p--temascal (steam bath)
q--garden with chillis, and "tomatoes"
r--peach trees
s--pig-pen with gate to the street
t--fire-wood drying

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

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Fig. 11.--House Viewed from the Street Gate